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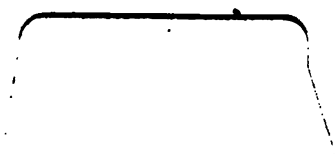
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*I, Citizen of Eternity*

*BY GERTRUDE SANBORN*

**BLITHESOME JOTTINGS**

**A Diary of Humorous Days**

*I,*  
*CITIZEN OF*  
*ETERNITY*

A DIARY OF HOPEFUL DAYS

BY  
GERTRUDE SANBORN



BOSTON  
THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY  
1920

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THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY

The Four Seas Press  
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

TO  
MARY MacLANE

A psychic woman creature,  
Triumphantly hopeful  
In a common place niche,  
Over a dusty typewriter,  
Not in Waco, Tex,  
Nor Red Wing, Minn,  
But in Milwaukee, Wis,  
Greets you and regrets  
Your melancholy view  
Of life, and presents  
Another and more  
Hopeful outlook.



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*I, Citizen of Eternity*



# I, CITIZEN OF ETERNITY

## AQUA MARINE DAY

**I**T is a flaming blue and gold day; patches of golden rod here; curves and dashes of blue water there; Lombardy poplars surdily erect; red berries; caroling birds; voices calling; bells; and the tea kettle singing.

Air, delicately perfumed, ruffles my muslin curtains. I raise my head from an embroidered pillow case, the gift of a friend.

My foot touches the floor. It is freshly swept, cool and strewn with blue and white rugs; there is a dash of black woven in at the corners. It furnishes a contrast: contrast is one of life's billion joys. A bit of black at the waist line of a sea-green gown; cherry blossoms scattered over a squat vase with bent, black twigs peeping through; a snowy, spongy steamed pudding with black raspberries caught in the hollows.

My bath water is cool. I splash and sing. With cries of exultant joy I wake the septic, cold walls; the dog; the startled neighbors. I determine to probe afresh my unexplored regions of conscious-

ness: to search the coming day for all it has to offer of happiness and worth.

My friend Winifred says, "plague take the person who is always looking on the bright side of things" and demands to be told which is the bright side of a toothache. From which I take it she has never had a toothache; never seen the bright gleam of the rescuing forceps; never admired pats of cement; nor cleverly molded gold inlays; nor bits of porcelain; never felt the joy of being surrounded by keen instruments of relief; never, in fact, experienced an overwhelming sense of thankfulness at being other than an impoverished American Indian in the year 1490.

A good dentist invariably awakes my interest in things scientific; he rams them down my throat with his forefinger. That I may chew, swallow and live the dentist plods through a lifetime of dentistry. I leave my pain in his office and go out cramful of joy; I remember his lair as a delightfully modern place full of curious thought awakening apparatus; mentally I sniff the pungent aroma of his colored dentifrice for days. There is nothing about a dentist to make me shudder; there is nothing about anything to make me shudder, because I am not obliged to contemplate one thing eternally. I am not obliged to sit in the dentist's chair and think of decayed teeth, my debts, or Dante's Inferno. I can think of an

opera, peach jam on Parker house rolls, and my new silk dress. I can dream of fair cities; banquets; waves rolling on a long, clean shore; blue mountain snows; green, smiling valleys.

Shining from my dip in the blue-green water I survey myself in a long glass. I determine to cover my back, my limbs and my head with raiment that is trim, clean and delicately pleasing.

I am of vast importance in the world.

I am one of the cogs.

If I slip out of place some alchemy of fate turns me from a cog to a clog.

If I slip I become a detriment to the great wheel of humanity, driven by patient sweating arms and legs and backs eloquently bent for usefulness.

There is a road called "nerves." I determine to keep off that; it is thickly cluttered with vast buildings of stone; there are barred windows; sanitarium cots; emergency wards; divorce courts; lost friendships; doctors' bills; ruined hopes; undigested dinners, and shotguns.

There is a corner called "greed." I drop my appetite for pie on it; I lay down a scheme to defraud an orphan; I let my neighbor pass me on the way to the vegetable bargain counter. She has six children. I have none.

I am common place. I am in no way extraordinary.

I am modern from beaten egg shampoo to

kaleidoscope hose. I neither smoke, chew, nor drink. I am not in love with some other girl's man.

I am like a dog that loves petting; like a cook; like a woodland sprite; like a detective. I have the humor of a street car conductor: I laugh when a fat woman is caught in the rain; a fat woman with yellow clad legs and a short ratine skirt.

My body obeys instantly when my mind yells step lively please.

I am young as long as my soul keeps ahead of my legs and urges me on.

I am forceful. I have heaven, the ancients, and aqua marine tinted lake Michigan behind me.

If my great great great grandfather was a burglar, a liar, a wheat king, a pawn broker, a gunman, I fear not.

I am I.

No fellow creature can possibly defile me. I have built myself. A few crumbling stones, unwisely laid in youth, I am replacing.

I care for myself studiously that I may love others helpfully. I am proud of the breath in my body. I cannot keep myself for myself alone. Some day I must return whence I came—wise, unwilted, all wool and a yard wide.

## A PLACE IN THE MOONLIGHT

**T**O-DAY I played bezique; rode in the street cars; made money; bought clothes; argued with a friend; sat in a close room reading the newspapers; trudged through a department store; poured over columns of figures; sold shoes to the ragman; repaired an automobile cover; sang in a choir; and wrote a poem.

I was part of the hurly-burly of the vast onward sweep of things.

Now it is the hour just at the edge of day when the full page turns over exhaling the mystic scent of fading but cherished roses, and offers for my inscription the cool, blank page of night.

I unlace my shoes and slip my toes from my stockings. I unlace my mind and slip it past its conventions. All day my toes were hermetically sealed in neat modish shoes and my mind was occupied by the blustering customs of the daily struggle. But this is my hour. The long busy day belonged to the world and its people; my mind forged ahead and grappled with problems.

In my barefooted abandon I go right out in the yard under the elm tree. I care not a whit what Mrs. Whittlesful next door may think. They are my feet; this is my tree; it is my hour.



As the cool grass brushes my toes there is an inner stirring. I lift my head and peer into the sky. I am unaccustomed to its magnificence; to the brilliance of stars; but soon these things interest me tremendously; my glance becomes bold.

The other night when I came home from the theatre I looked at the sky for a moment, but I felt no thrill. Ah, that was because I had my shoes on. The current of freedom was grounded; it was unable to sweep through and through. My free mind slipping away to the skies, and my free toes on the cool earth make a powerful circuit.

I move from under the tree. Now in the moonlight I am in line with the ancients. Every tickling blade of grass is a ticket in the box office of life; they let me in to a front seat on the crust of this sphere where I gaze at the comedies and tragedies of centuries. I perceive the upbuilding and the shattering of the ages; I behold the glories of dynasties; I am awed and amused by kings; I criticize with thought and I write the deductions of my mind in my heart's blood on my quivering soul. Yesterday I criticized a play at the Davidson Theatre; I gave ten lines to gowns; five paragraphs to the leading man; I closed with some persiflage that strung the thing out to a three quarter column.

A place was cleared for me in a newspaper office; it was dusty with street sweepings that blew



in through the screen; an editor paid me in bills; I bought cheese, ripe olives and a small rhinestone buckle: but for my criticism of the centuries I received more, much more. I received open sesame to the worlds upon worlds upon worlds out beyond. A place was cleared for me in the Milky Way; it was dusky with star mist; I surveyed long dark strips lying dimly across; we call them coal sacks; a scientist says perhaps these mysterious strips are really heaven. You are scornful; I am pleased. There are many statements in science and astronomy that bring infinite peace and harmony.

I think of God when I look at the workings of a clock; at the building of a bridge; at a train climbing a mountain.

I cannot pray to God to give me this, give me that, as He has already provided all. If I do not find things it is because I do not care enough; work enough; hope enough.

Here in the moonlight I, and my life, assume gigantic proportions. All that has gone before is mine; all that has been said, done, thought, is mine to sift, keep, discard. I and millions of other I's are representatives now of the great firm of humanity with a home office in the sky. I am carrying on what the centuries have wrought; and in spite of this smashing fact I sometimes concern myself with arguing over the price of cheap, scent-

ed soap; or bawling out bridge scores; or dancing in foul smelling rooms.

To-day I felt small when a door was slammed in my face; when someone intimated I didn't know much anyhow; but to-night I feel colossal; gigantic as the stretch of ages. Thousands of hearts, souls, desires, achievements have gone to make me. Storms have wrecked; suns have warmed; frosts have chilled; glaciers have slipped; seas have dried; wars have devastated; peace has built; tongues have mingled to produce me and my place. Me, and my untrammelled joy! I am no accident. I am no mistake in a cycle of blunders. I am a key in its lock. I am the glorious residue of striving peoples. It is my turn here. I carry on my shoulders, for a short journey of years, skies, stars, moonlight, planets and the world's wonderful burden.

Always there have been rules, and rites, and ceremonies. A priest offers a creed. I accept it, but turn it upside down; inside out. For in spite of palliating doctrines, hungry clergy, sanctimonious uncles I am still I. I melt, mingle and shape a thousand creeds to form one. It is then truly my creed; that by which I rise and retire; and it is full of joyousness. Because of it I love flowers; babies; strong men; women with unsmirched wit; the remarkable figures of Stanislaw Szukalski,

and the smile of the policeman on our beat over a hot pot of coffee on a cold winter night.

Joy accumulates joy. For the bedridden man there is the joy of books, friends, jaunts in the realms of the wise ones; for the toiler there is the joy of his home, the laughter of children, baked potatoes and gravy; for the girl the joy of her lover; for the poet the joy of virginal sheets of paper. Life is full from the beginning to the end, and the whole of life is pure joy. Sorrows are only the husks of joy. One by one, with secret fingers, I must turn them back alone. It is a whole life's work; it is adventure; romance.

## ASPIRATION

**I** AM not afraid of life, nor of death, nor of something just in between.

My days are too full of this and that to hold fear. There is always someone to help; someone to love; something to conquer. When the stockings are darned I boil vegetables. When my family goes on a picnic with a basketful of fried chicken, and leaves me behind, I go next door and cuddle a strange baby; or invite the old clothes woman in; or go to a socialistic meeting.

When I feel reasonably certain that there is a hunk of dust under the refrigerator I attack it. As it sails away through the open door I feel reborn. Dust is the thing I work hardest to get that I may get rid of it.

Very often when I am cleaning, or cooking, or listening to music, or walking on the hills at sunset, a stinging bitter-sweet feeling grips some sensitive inner part of me. The outer petals of my soul droop suddenly as though touched with clear biting cold. The mysterious warm core of my soul ceases to pulsate and hangs in my body like a small crystal ball in the path of a nor'easter. When I was younger I took these symptoms to

presage an attack of biliousness. Now I know it is simply the essence of me pining for God. My soul, which is ordinarily very patient under common place tasks, now and then takes a day off. My soul is big. Big as the sky and my body groans and creaks as it bursts through. My soul and my body can never be one, any more than a man and his wife can be one. They exist side by side, but when all is said and done, they are two and not one. My body enjoys coarse comforts—warm stockings, knitted mufflers, peppermint candy, taxis, lands, and gold. My soul does not care for these things, but contemplates them patiently as a passenger with folded hands sits on the deck of a boat sailing on to a distant shore contemplates the scenes along the way. These stirrings of my soul about the deck of my body send the uncertain craft lurching and pitching with fright, till I remember my passenger has every right to look over the side—is privileged to scan the horizon for a glimpse of the loved shore ahead and that in order to bring peace to my internal economy again I need not have recourse to the calomel bottle, but just grant my soul a little time off and all will be well.

In the breasts of millions of people—black, white and yellow—a desire for the something beyond death has been planted; planted firm; plant-

ed deep. We have been boiled in oil for expressing it; racked and tortured; scourged and blinded; but through the bounding centuries we cherish our hope.

God would not bestow this overwhelming aspiration simply to mock us with it.

## MANIFEST MYSTERIES

**I**AM a soft, clinging, palpitant mystery swinging for and wide in a dim, mysterious sky, on a wholly mysterious ball.

Everything around me is a mystery; the fly in the cream pitcher; the full petaled flower; the sunrise; warm spattering drops of rain. I can't make any of these things. I can merely fashion replicas in clay; or paint on canvas; or draw word pictures with my pencil. I cannot penetrate mysteries. If I could but know electricity . . .

Often at night I go down to the river; a river thick with flat, dirty coal boats, and weather beaten tugs, and insignificant craft of every description. I hunch down into my coat collar with my back against the grimy windows of an unspeakable hash house, and I look into the sky; for, from this particular spot, I obtain a magnificent view of an electric sign—a great gorgeous burst of splendor that trails commonplace words about housework, cooking, and saving on bills at right angles across God's heaven. It spurts and splashes against the dark curtain of space and it means infinitely more than it says. It is a miracle; a message; a marvel surpassing words, and man



puts it to work to deal in matters of saving on bills!

People, in that part of town, imagine I am waiting for a friend who will presently come along with the price of a sandwich. They haven't the slightest idea that I am bent on the adoration of a sign. If I were to say, "Yes, I know this is a cold, windy spot, but I'm going to stand here and do nothing for a whole hour but look up at that sign on the top of that tall building across the way—just watch the golden liquid letters trail across and across, and with each one as it trails off into blackness I am going to experience a thrilling sensation; a feeling of fire and ice; of joy and elation; a feeling far bigger than any you'll get in there over a pot of coffee, or in some other place over ham and eggs and a noisy jazz band—and here—just a moment before you go—when I die I'll chuck the harp and the streets of gold and all the affluence in heaven if someone will just explain electricity, or give me some hope that in the sphere after the sphere after the next I may begin to comprehend some of its wonders"—if I said all this they would begin looking around for the police. So I keep still. I find pedestrians and police misunderstand very often. There is a vast amount of misunderstanding everywhere about everything.

A while ago I had my house wired. A ten-dol-

lar-a-week person, whose dingy apparel bagged at the knees, took possession of the premises. He talked a great deal about "them wires and bulbs—these here fixtures—some boobs at the office." Despite his grammatical errors I looked on him with awe. He was the link between darkness and light. He hitched me up to the greatest power in the universe. He induced the living flame of electricity to bear me company through long winter evenings. With worn, clumsy tools he nailed, screwed, and bolted the most stupendous marvel in the world into my modest two by four dwelling. Delving into the basement, climbing within reach of the ceiling, sprawling all over the floor on his stomach he evolved this miracle. Ignorant; grimy; clumsy; a forty dollar a week nobody; still he linked me to the great unknown from out of which comes this glowing, crackling power. He handled this vast gift from God with insolent stupidity. It was no glorified wonder to him; it was no boon; no paralyzing pleasure; no guide post to eternity. It was a job. A tiresome, puttering ten dollar a week job, and darn it, he wished, for heaven's sake, he had took up that offer to skin out to Montana. I told him for earth's sake I'd trade with him. I'd take his coils of wire and his tools, and spend the rest of my days wiring houses for electricity and think life had treated me pretty well. He grinned, asked

for a cold drink from the kitchen faucet, and told the cook I was a queer dame with some punk ideas in my belfry.

After he had gone I snapped a switch, and sitting down under an inverted daffodil tinted bowl tried to read, but I could only think of me in this 20th century. Me, living surrounded by magic; me, looked at by billions and billions of eyes that smile from the skies; eyes that once knew none of these wonders, but now know all. They stare amazed at me and my 20th century equanimity. They marvel that I am so cold, so unfeeling, so prosaic. I fly in the air; I delve in the earth; I pluck plums from the tree of science; I grow rare, wonderful fruits, I walk in vast handsome cities; I float on the water in palaces; I talk to my friends who are hundreds of miles away; the earth is yielding to me every one of her wonders. With my own hands I fashion marvels. And through it all I am dully complacent. I do not catch the gleam from the eyes above for I cry at an open grave. Because my friend lays down his book and his half solved puzzles, quits his room which is lighted by the glory of heaven run in on a few tiny wires, and progresses a little farther into the rich country of Eternity, I mourn. If I were bigger, broader, less stupid, if I could read the message of spring alone, I would smile. When my friend went to Switzerland to contemplate beauty

and marvels of scenery, I smiled. I knew Switzerland existed, because I had a miniature chalet from there carved out of wood; and a wee, dainty watch; and picture postals. In somewhat the same fashion I should know that heaven is there. I have had a wee, dainty friend from heaven, fashioned of spirit and flesh; I have had world enveloping warmth from the sun, lacking which I had not existed.

Every morning as regularly as the postman comes around I receive written word from heaven; written in rock; in field; in bubbling spring; dropped from the wing of a bird; blazoned from shooting twig and opening bud. I could not carve an intricate Swiss chalet; someone in Switzerland did it. I cannot make trees, nor coal, nor dogs, nor stars. Someone in heaven does it. If I work hard, treat my employer with respect, save my money and go on hoping I shall some day see Switzerland. If I regard wonders understandingly, treat God with respect and go on hoping, I shall some day see heaven.

I have gotten so that I cannot lie, quarrel nor cheat under my electric light bulbs; I feel as if an eternal eye were upon me; that dingy forty-dollar-a-week person has revolutionized my existence; he has opened my eyes; he has preached a delicate but powerful sermon; he has put hundreds of new ideas into my head. I reverence working

men. I have respect for the man who digs in a sewer; there is something in the management of the sewer that he knows a great deal more about than I do; something of infinite value to me; to the house I live in; to the street I live on; to the neighbors; to the city; I do not feel that my maid, my laundress, or the ashman are beneath me. They all know things I wot not of; they link me to the universe; they hold me to my path. Language, birth, education, are strung about us like beads around a savage. Just because the ashman has fewer beads than I have does not mean that he is less kind, less good, less a candidate for immortality than I. After all, beads are mere piffle when held against eternal fires.

## MERELY A CARTON

**W**HEN I enter a theatre I look happily around the brilliant foyer. I stand silent a moment or two to breath in the sweet scent of flowers. Then I check my wraps and trail on into the glittering, throbbing music-touched spaciousness. In sheer silken garments I sit perfectly still while my mind, an agile many legged spider, skims all about picking up delicate treasures of brain pabulum.

I prefer to go to the theatre alone. I prefer to meet a massy thought in a quiescent, reasonable spirit. I do not want to chew sticky caramels; listen to the last escapade of somebody's cook; discuss gowns; bean loaf; bull dogs; nor divorces. The playwright has said something to me, and I must hear it. I came into this world alone. I shall go out of it alone, so why shouldn't I go to the theatre alone? But people think it strange. You know they do.

I have schooled myself out of loneliness. Even when I sit on a chill November Sunday morning chewing the crackling waffles of an eggless age—bereft by a howling wind of the morning paper—bereft by fate of those I love—bereft by the dog, who has gone out to hunt dried bones—bereft of

a good digestion—I am not lonely. I am companioned by a tranquil, sympathetic, deep, colorful, joyous, sparkling, age-old essence. The atmosphere is quickened; the sunlight falling aslant my morsel of waffle becomes more effulgent. I tingle with anticipation; I am breathless with ecstasy; alone in my breakfast room I am entertaining a celestial presence. Years ago I entertained it when I wore swaddling clothes; I bumped it about upon the floor; then I dragged it through interminable drab school days. Later, as I grew older, I found this presence perpetually unassuming and courteous, unless I took it to functions, soirées, thé dansants, or glutted it with receptions. Then it got to pounding about in my cranium. It acted like the very old deuce. My head ached with the turmoil. Because I flounced from society's skinny arm and flew home in a transport of bewilderment I was severely punished and sent to bed supperless. I was considered stubborn, backward, lacking in good taste, and an all around fool. Overweighted by this celestial presence my anaemic body writhed in agonized contortions. Every time I went to a frivolous function the presence in me was thrown off the main track, and the bumping about advised me something was wrong. Suddenly I realized that my real business in life was the safe conduct of my celestial visitor. I discovered that my body, and the pleasures derived

from gratifying it were as brass compared to the fine gold sifting, sifting through my soul.

My small, rather well formed body is, after all, merely a carton. The particular bit of everlasting soul, intensely luminous as radium, with which I am intrusted, has stopped here on an eternal pilgrimage of the universe to be shown around by me. Now if a visitor comes down to Milwaukee from Madison to see me I show her about. I take her to the stores; the parks; the brick yards. I point out the beds of cannas and try to tell her how bricks are made. I coax her to the lake front and descant upon the similarity between our bay and the Bay of Naples. I try to please her. Never once in her presence does it enter my mind to say I am lonely. Yet she is merely from Madison. When she goes away I know she will come back again. If I have something further to say to her there is telephone connection.

But to my visitor from infinity how rude I have been! There was a time when I actually sat down and moped because another human carton, of whom I was fond, went to the circus, surreptitiously, leaving me behind. What must my celestial visitor have thought! What obloquy to convert myself into a sullen lump of moodiness when this fair, sweet-willed, patient stranger was about.

My body, with its two stout legs, is to show my soul over the earth, and my soul is not interested



in frivolities. It is interested only in progress. It has not always been here. It is not here to stay. It is passing through. I am its cicerone. May I be an intelligent one! I must acquaint it with socialism; with great industries; with vast factories and their methods; with the constructive ideas of big men; with art; with science; with the world's best labors. I must not acquaint it with unworthy things, for when it is gone—it is gone. There is no telephone connection. When my celestial visitor passes on to the next sphere I want to be remembered as an adequate carton. I do not wish to be spoken of as "That G. Sanborn, back there on earth, who pinched me and chilled me. I gained nothing. I came away empty. Mercy! I believe she went through me and acutually took away some of my lustre. Why is it that those cartons are so insensible of us? They are so afraid of something they call 'death.' If they carried us with vision the journey would be more comfortable for us all. The vital truths their minds uncover are assimilated by us and go on forever, yet many of them do not pick and choose carefully."

Rather would I hear the echo of my soul's voice saying, "My little carton was imbued with the glory of democracy, and she loved the open meadows. These two things were paramount in her mind. In our journey together she impressed

them thoroughly upon me. She showed me the beauties in each. She urged them upon me. We were so busy studying, seeing, raveling, that not once on the way did either of us feel lonely. I gained some really helpful knowledge down there on the earth, and with pride and pleasure I recommend the ideas of my little carton, G. Sanborn, to citizenship in Eternity."

## MY PUBLIC LIBRARY

**M**INE the steps; mine the nobly proportioned foyer; mine the intricate mosaic of floor and wall; mine the naked, glistening statues of Indians; the glowing low-hung lights; fresh washed corridors and columns. Mine the tales, the wisdom, the pronouncements, of a world of learned men—all mine! Piled tier on tier; dusted, ticketed in white bordered with a tiny red line vivid as life blood—they wait ready to my hand.

That great author I met on the street yesterday—heavens!—he wore sable; he was attended by pompous friends; he was haughty; hurried; his opulent manner frightened me into a fruiterer's shop where I bought two sour and dried up oranges and fumbled with the change, the buttons on my coat, and what not, until I was sure the opulent one was safely over the street. No doubt his thoughts and mine might clasp hands graciously, but his smooth glove emerging from his bristling fur sleeve and my shabby one, bounded by faded broadcloth, can never meet.

But in my public library! Ah, that is another tale. There, half an hour later, clothes outside the question, I met the opulent one, in unassuming print. Shorn of his strutting friends, ticketed,

indexed, classified between the little red lines. I rushed down the gulvering, glittering recesses of his mind, and sat unashamed in my faded broadcloth, my frayed gloves turning the wondrous pages.

Sometimes I regret my stunted education. A weak stomach was my educational Bluebeard. I stand aghast before engaging forms of rhetoric and mourn. At times I comfort myself by thinking that great halls of learning have a crippling effect on the embryonic poet. Imagination is shoved like a naughty child into a dark closet while Form is invited into the light and made much of. Little brother Rhetoric spurns sister Rhapsody. In this mood I look askance at college walls and going my untutored way make haphazard records of varied days, adventures, and meditations. I am at a loss when it comes to arranging typographical decorations, but if my punctuation is poor my heart is warm. I cannot produce a codified treatise, but I can dream. In my public library I meet all men unafraid. So, life assumes validity and charm. While I have carfare and can get to its doors my public library will continue to educate me.

I dream, and read, and turn pages with a clergyman on one side of me and an Italian laborer on the other. The Italian has wandered into the wrong room. He was in search of the magazine

section, but coming in from the bleak, snow blown street he became confused. He has settled down in a ponderous chair. The warmth and silence entice all thought of reading from his mind, and presently he falls asleep. A dapper, brisk attendant pussy-foots down the aisle. I slide a copy of Emerson under the Italian's hand as it lies on the polished table. The Italian preserves his attitude of deep cogitation. The clergyman looks up, and smiles, and nods. He and I continue to cram our heads with various aphorisms.

Having the slumbering Italian so close arouses a pleasant feeling of democracy. He symbolizes that vast, patient class which we must help along the way. Shut up in college walls these illuminating bits of life would not be mine. I look about the walls of my public library and smile contentedly. I prefer to learn in public with the larger portion of mankind. True I shall only brush lightly on isms and ologies, but I shall be polished, and tutored, and squared by dear, sweating peoples.

## I SMILE AT A HANGING

THERE is always a lot of talk about lost persons. It is rot. No one is ever lost. Did a tree, or a bird, or a leaf on the river ever get lost? They merely progress in a great disordered order. The man who was hung yesterday? No, of course, he's not lost. He made a mistake. If I make a mistake and put too much milk in a cake, do I consider myself lost? Not at all. If I had the low order of intelligence possessed by the man who was hung perhaps I might have spoiled a life instead of a cake. You don't suppose the judge had that man hanged because he wanted him lost or damned or thought he would be put irrevocably outside the scheme of things. He had him hanged because, to his notion, there was nobody here quite capable of giving him knowledge. He was too unutterably dense to receive instruction. Therefore the judge passed him on to the next sphere. The judge was sure there was someone in the next terraqueous globe who could handle the case more advantageously.

A hanging admits two things beyond a doubt. It admits human inefficiency and it admits eternity. Therefore at a hanging it is not out of place to wear a slightly pleasant expression.

Here, in Wisconsin, we do not hang. I am neither for nor against it. I lie back on the immutable law that nothing is ever lost. Why argue behind it? A few years, more or less, cannot add nor take away from it.

Whenever my religious convictions get below par, and some event has landed a solar plexus on my sense of security in the next life, I hunt up a hanging. I have never been intimately acquainted with a judge. At the time my grandfather sat on the supreme bench I was more interested in nursing bottles than in judges. But I have grown to regard their decisions, and answers, and pronouncements with awe. Whenever I see a man that is to be hanged, and know that a judge has sentenced him, it is almost like a certificate on the hereafter. The judge, a strong, brilliant personage, strikes out into the beyond and I cling to his coat tails feeling wonderfully reassured as I smile.

## WRAITHS

SOMETIMES I push the curtains apart and sit in the window at twilight.

There is an eerie blue-mistiness about the twilight that wreaths enchantment about me.

I see points of light, here and there, as they bravely pierce the wavering dimness.

I see leaves scurrying up and across the roadway. But the objects I meditate on are the vague, silent figures of men slanting homeward. Some are eager; some stooped and slow; some carry bundles; some drive majestically free-handed, and alighting at the curb, dash with prosperous, swinging motion into tiled vestibules.

To me, in my silent room behind my pane of glass, these voiceless, dust touched figures are like little tumbling pieces in a sombre-colored kaleidoscope.

These men figures have returned from the turbulent hard beating heart of the city to all manner of wives. They come with the weariness of struggle puckering their kind eyes. Their willing arms are cramped and tired. They have bought, sold, wrecked and constructed through a long day.

My heart goes out to these silent, slanting men



figures. Some of them have lost sons in the war; some of them have been unfortunate in business; some have not kept faith; but at the day's end, in the blue-mistiness, they slant, unerringly nestward.

Their wives do not see them coming. They are busy steaming puddings; directing servants; rouging their faces; scolding the children; telephoning the neighbors; knitting for the needy, and dozens of other things.

All up and down the street there is not a wife in a window. Not one pair of eyes beside mine to see these dear, pale wraiths slanting homeward.

I pick out figures I know. There is the tenor across the avenue. A big, jovial fellow. He lunges around the corner with a bag of coffee under his arm. His head bobs up and down as he picks his way over the stones and casts hurried, eager glances at the windows ahead. No one greets him. I happen to know his wife, too. I know she is sitting at her typewriter building an inky monocracy of recondite sentences, in connection with women's rights. An acrid, searching aroma steals unheeded round her head. It is the stew burning in the kitchen.

The days of woman's amenable softness are gone. In the cauldron of centuries is being cooked a new state. The brain of woman, long pushed under the boiling broth with the huge tines

of tradition and custom, is mounting steadily to the rim.

Poor, pitiful old Eve—thoughtless, voteless, friendless—with no job but the ephemeral one of making herself beautiful from an extremely low stock. There was one big day in her life and that was the day she was introduced to Adam, closely followed by their courtship and marriage. The last episode, and rightly, suggested to Milton the “Paradise Lost.”

It is a far cry from Eve to me. But at last there is a vast world wide upheaval going on in the twilight.

Gone is the halycon twilight of other centuries.

My twilight is no longer quiescent. It is vigilant, sentient, its tearing asunder reverberates over the earth.

Through long yesterdays woman waited on and for man. To-day she waits for nothing. She is no more the pusilanimous half of a perpetual dyad. She is a free agent in the throes of a gigantic redintegrating movement. She has invaded industry by the million.

Eve is busy getting her rights in the world.

When Eve emerges from her transition period she will again extend her hand to Adam, but this time with free comradeship, not with mere sex tremblings.

So I see the pale, dismayed wraiths of men slanting homeward through the cool violet twilight. And I grieve for them a wee bit. But I am proud of women. I would not have them turn back, pliable servitors, with faces against windows, imbued only with the desire to cajole and please.

## PROFITABLE IDLING

**I**T seems an idle, superficial thing to select a sheltered nook in an old rock, and to sit swinging one foot in the sun. I am, however, deeply occupied. It is an accomplishment to sit quietly imbibing the tonic air. I view the beauties and mysteries of bent grass blades and moist flower petals. When I run, talk, walk or play I lose the deep, limpid quiet of the shadowed pool beyond. When I sit dumbly still I hear witching voices of birds.

Presently I stop swinging my foot.

My eyelashes cease their quivering, and from round, set eyes I stare upward ecstatic. I am a living thing over millions of dead. Could I ask more?

It is no longer in my heart to fuss at the tartness of gooseberry pie; to scold the waitress because my coffee is cold; to write a contemptuous letter to an acquaintance.

This is what the idle moment in the gray-green nook of the old wall has done for me.

A female person, looking from a window close by, ascribes all laziness, indolence, do-nothingness to me. She thinks I am vacant minded; that after eating muffins and curling my hair I am too su-

pine to do some useful thing such as embroidering interminable guest towels. She does not know that I am embroidering my soul. If I told her she would say, "Shucks, why can't you do something that is something?"

I conclude it is not necessary to run frantically and grab at life. Sitting in a deep mood brings many colored thought fish. Of course if I am being paid to whack out a story on my typewriter it is not just that I poke off somewhere to cogitate. I idle on my own time and money. And it repays me.

I sit in a mossy nook and stop, look and listen, and come away proof, for one day, against a list of pitfalls.

## A HUT

**D**AY in; day out; year in; year out; I live here in Milwaukee. I write articles on fish, mosquitoes, babies, the superiority of the male brain to the female—in which I do not believe—there is no female brain—as well speak of a female liver. All the morning I sit at my dusty typewriter and write, write, write for people all over this big country who cannot write for themselves.

In the afternoon the sun comes poking round and prods me in the shoulder.

I get up, close the door on a mess of crumpled papers and pencil sharpenings and stroll over to Lake Michigan where I think thoughts that belong entirely to me and have nothing to do with mosquitoes, or irrigation, or gravel pits.

I have it in me to live in a hut in a wood with only one pair of stockings and a blue gingham frock. But having been born in a bustling manufacturing center of highly cultivated parents I cannot live in a wood or even in a hut.

I dwell elegantly in a white enameled apartment that has mahogany doors with glass knobs.

I own embroidered luncheon cloths, silver platters, porch swings, and a few good pictures.

But every morning when I awaken I think of

the hut. Living as I do I am obliged to keep pace with the seasons. In the spring it devolves upon me to change my blue velvet winter hat for one bedecked with flowers suited to the tender season.

I must do, have, eat and wear all the things that will be pleasing to the taste of the persons in my neighborhood.

This between me and my hut.

This between civilization and freedom.

Though I feel odd and apart, I must not be odd and apart. I must conform to the prescribed rules of conduct. Therefore I must earn money. Even though Buddha, Confucius, the Christ, turned away from it I must go on earning it to enable myself to wear gray spats when gray spats are worn.

But I think very often of the secret joys of a hut and the free feel of a blue gingham frock.

Once I mentioned the frock and the hut to a friend of mine, an actress; "Why, what a wonderful idea!" she warbled, "We'll go Saturday. I'm so fearfully tired. You find the hut and I'll bring an old frock and an old nightie—nothing more."

I met her at the station.

I had a small parcel tucked under my arm, my blue gingham frock. She had on a new silk gown; a large gray hat with a flaunting feather; all her diamonds; a vast bulging suitcase filled

with satin slippers; peignors; yachting costumes; golf togs and heaven knows what.

And behind her came her advertising man.

I wanted to tear my hair. Instead I had to discuss a change of plans with the advertising man. He said it would not do for us to go and bury ourselves in some outlandish spot. So we had to go to a fashionable, crowded, summer hotel. I telegraphed for my clothes and sent my neatly rolled gingham frock back home by parcel post.

This is as close as I ever came to the hut.



## A GOLDEN SHOWER

**A**LWAYS the sixty golden moments of an hour are pelting softly on my head, my face, my fingers. They pour, pour, pour, about me and I have only to exchange them for life; for joy; for the scent of flowers; the clear, high laughter of children.

Friends have failed me; cooks have stolen my silk waists and jewelry; the particular morning paper I liked best has gone into bankruptcy; I have missed soap sales by a day; my shoes have burst out before they were paid for; I have gone on trips Saturday afternoons, expecting to view scenery, and ridden along behind miles of freight cars; but to offset all this the cajolerie of future promises, in the shower of sixty golden moments, beats, beats gently around my head.

Can I feel disappointment or know despair when from cradle to grave this fresh unceasing shower laves and soothes; brushes away the old and brings the new—brushes away the old and brings the new?

A golden moment—a golden moment—a golden moment—so they go. From a storm troubled hour I move forever to a fair unchartered hour.

At nine o'clock certain unpleasant things hap-

pen. Swish—swish of the golden showers and at ten something delightful has taken place; there are gay people in the street; a motor at the door; a letter in the box; a voice at the telephone.

When I die I want my bodily carcass resolved into gray ash and blown from the top of a cheery, smiling hill where the boughs of apple trees wave, and there is deep, deep purple clover. There my sixty golden moments will catch me up, and I will go on with them forever; now here; now there; with the bird; with the bee; with the spring flower poking through the mold; in every calm, fair, sweet activity of the open.

I will be busy as I am busy in my house to-day. I will push sturdily or delicately, as it may be, but push forever on with the dripping golden shower.

In my powdered grayness I will be wafted over mountains and seas, over delectable vistas. I will stretch and expand and careen on into Eternity as happily as I am careening now, for what is this ceaseless patter of sixty golden moments in every now but Eternity?

## A SCHOLARLY WORKMAN

**N**EAR the house where I live there is a long, strong bridge that spans a wide, cedar banked river.

I go there at dusk.

The flaming sky, the red and black of the slow moving water, the thin mists, falling, enchant me.

A whistle blows.

A solid stream of dusty, weary workmen push past me.

Outlined against the sky of eternal fires they present a spectacle that awes me.

I knew a young workman once, very intimately. As I write he lies wounded in France. He was one of the atoms in the great unwashed tribe that troupe past me on the long bridge at sunset.

He had little education. Circumstances had forced him out, a mere round-eyed babe, to toil and sweat for his particular pail and sausage. But he had a nimble wit and an expanding mind. He never stumbled dully over the bridge mumbling about his wrongs. He walked erect with his eyes on the sunset.

Night after night he smiled at me. Finally he said, "Hello." Then one night he stopped, and nodding his head toward the jostling mob that

surged about us he asked, "Well, what do you make of us?" I shrugged my shoulders. "I am merely here to see what you make of yourselves," I replied.

"I'll go home and get washed," said the boy, "And I'll come back after sunset. The bridge will be quiet then, and there'll be a yellow moon plowing through a black sky—there'll be lights bobbing below on the river—what say?"

"I'll be here at eight?" said I.

That was the beginning of a strange friendship.

I shall have to confess that while I have had the pleasure of knowing lawyers, physicians, painters, poets, clergymen, actors, manufacturers and many sorts of men, I have never known so sweet, so rare a being as this young workman. He was exquisitely fine! He had never seen a drawing room, but his soul was distilled gentleness. He had not read thick books, but he was a poet and a philosopher. The only preparation he was able to make upon leaving his grimy world to enter my more refined realm was the slight change made possible by a limited cake of soap.

Our friendship lasted two years and I count it as one of the dearest things in life. People smiled to see me walking and conversing earnestly with a tattered, ill shod, brigandish sort of person. But

my brigand was a finely caparisoned cavalier in the realm of thought. His ideas were flaming torches. They were odd; streakedly illuminating; pungently rare like a gombier flambeau. My family thought I was tutoring the young workman; that I was instructing him in the simple rudiments of speech. My heavens! It was I who was learning. I could flourish a pencil, but mine was not the eloquence of this full throated youngster. Whatever it was he did in the great smoking foundry at the river's edge I do not know. He panted, and puffed, and sweated at some gigantic, satanic, sooty task every day in the year.

In the midst of bellowings and blowings, thunderings and smashings he did his bit in a terrifying industrial world, and then, at six o'clock he was shot forth in a puff of stifling, fetid air.

After the magic passes with soap and basin I have seen him standing with a flower in his hand lost in a study of its fragile petals. His whole existence was bent on a search for beauty. He never saw the ugly, or dull, or mean. Even in the molten metal he descried grandeur and nobility of form.

He taught me that it is the workman who turns the world, and it is a world that tolls only for to-day just as it tugged and hauled and pulled 12,000 years ago.

"If," he told me, "I accumulate pennies to-day

for my child of to-morrow so that it may soar on the wings of freedom, so ought my generation provide by organization, for the exemption of future generations from useless labor. If this stream of men on the bridge had no need to struggle for the bare necessities of life they might be at leisure part of the time. And if they were at leisure they would think, and if they thought they would find their souls. Now they must content themselves with a few short reaching dollars, a pail of coffee and a piece of sausage, small incommensurable dwellings where the soot of the factory falls like black rain. And this less than existence, this life span of theirs, shorn even of the pleasure known to a cow rolling in the sweet, cool grass has fallen upon them because though humanity has organized to destroy herself she has not organized to build. Through the slow moving centuries she has erected no warehouse. Again and again humanity has produced an over abundance, but there is always a deficit, toil, starvation.

“From a few aspects labor for daily subsistence is beautiful and majestic, but from well earned leisure is steeped an enriching, ennobling draught. In return for labor I receive my pail, my coarse chunk of bread and my square of sausage. In return for a few hours’ leisure I would receive into my being the rare beauties of the world, and

my soul would ascend over the sooty roofs to the farthest star.

"These thoughts would be bitter-sweet to you if you toiled in a foundry."

That was it! But I, what could I do?

I went home, pulled the blankets from my bed; ate a dry crust; forebore my bath; removed the screen from my window, and created an atmosphere of stinging desolation. I did not want to think down to a condition of wretched discomfort, I wanted to experience tweaking despair and evolve a way back to the fair ground of comfort. In one night I wanted to lead a whole world full of toilers back with me, but after staying awake for hours goaded by a chill, miasmatic damp, tortured by mosquitoes, unfamiliarly hungry, I evolved no scheme. I merely caught cold and called in a physician and he charged me \$5.00.

## A CURTAIN CALL

**I** WRITE this book now because two months from now I may be picking fruit in a foreign vineyard; or traveling toward Panama; or I may be dead.

Very often I pay \$1.25 for a volume that is advertised as a thrilling detective story; I buy a front seat at a theatre to view a detective play; I listen with bated breath to the tale of a charity worker who has unearthed a mysterious household in the slums, and all the while my individual existence is the most gripping enigma of all. These brown lisle thread stockings—will I be alive to put them on again next week?

As I turn this question over and over in my mind it resolves into a puissant, recondite thing.

If I were to know just how many more weeks, days, hours, minutes, I have to live, life would be fearful or it would be stale and flat. Untroubled by the necessity of ringing down the curtain on my own drama, I am free of the fear that I might drop it too soon and cut off something I was trying to accomplish, and so spoil the effectiveness of my existence; free of the fear that I might drop it too late and so expose a scene empty of words and works.



If this dropping of the curtain were left to me it would complicate my life and the lives of my friends beyond the limits of endurance.

My mother said, when I was a child, "Go out into the garden and play. I will call you when it is time for your music lesson." So I romped and played and sang through the golden hours with no shadow of worry over a possible tardiness, and no dull hanging-about fraught with crushing responsibility.

Mother had arranged it all for me.

It was sweet, comely and conclusive.

So God has arranged.

I am free to stray through the sunlit streets; free to love; free to read; to write; to laugh; to sing; to dream; to toil; to frolic; to rest; free until the moment I am called in by Him to ponder on immutable precepts.

It is so extremely beautiful an adjustment that I wish never to complain of it.

## EQUIPMENT

**T**OO much indoor life tethers the faculties and fatally poisons the mind.

By rambling I escape back to the sun.

To-day I strolled out into the country with my poor relation, the dog.

I sat at the edge of a pool, under the shadow of a grand-fatherly fruit tree and cast pebbles into the water.

In a peaceful friendly spirit the dog and I had wandered abroad together.

While I ruminated the dog busied himself with all those small dog activities that are so astoundingly forceful and so astonishingly futile.

He hurried to and fro. He fussed and fumed. He pursued tiny, scared creatures and insulted them with hoarse raucousness.

Presently he gave up the whole proceeding and sank down with his chin on my knee.

His tongue lolled out over his sharp teeth, and in the midst of the delicate, wistful, soul-gripping summer beauteousness he slept and dreamed of bones.

Into the brilliant sunlit moments I crowded ideas, aspirations, emotions. But the dog slept. His physical life was all important. Eating, sleep-

ing, breeding, bind his sleek carcass like gyves to the terrene orb.

The breezes from the far-wide sky sounded across my soul as across a quivering lute.

I had always wondered what happens to dogs after death.

Suddenly an answer came down the breeze.

Nothing!

I had always wondered what would happen to me after death.

Softly, delicately, almost imperceptibly, and yet bearing a cool, sharp point that sank, sank into my consciousness, came the answer down the breeze.

The mind of man is limitless and eternal.

Reviewing the days of the dog's life I found him equipped merely for this sphere. By contrast I am equipped for some other.

John Haynes Holmes has called my attention to the fact that the dog knows nothing of the philosophies of all time; he does not spend years in metaphysical conjectures; he is blind to modern scientific wonders; he does not spend hours in remorseful searching of his conscience; he does not make light of his shining body and rend it cruelly for the weal of a possible soul.

Though I have taken the dog's head in my two hands and gazed long into his eyes he has never put a thought into words; he has not built and

hoped and loved and died for the good of his kind; he has never chanted a hymn of praise to his Master.

These are but stepping stones for me, but they are all things the dog wots not of.

If death be the finish of me then there has been a vast, elaborate over provision in my equipment.

All provident nature casts the lie into my teeth.

The equipment with which the dog is endowed is ample for his life here, therefore when I gaze at the dog I know his finish is soon. But I am provisioned for a long, fruitful journey of the soul out somewhere beyond.

If this particular world were all there is for me then the fleetness of the greyhound I owned last year, and the snarling force of the bull dog sitting beside me to-day, are of more use than my philosophical brain. They are in better keeping with the scheme of things than the beneficence emanating from the heart of my Christian neighbor. Fudge!

I was not given an expanding mind, a joyous heart, a luminous soul, merely that I might barter daily for a dollar's worth of food, bustle up one road and down the next and then dissolve into thin nothingness.

I go on.

## RIBBON DREAMS

**S**OMETIMES there are people about who jar one.

People who are stupid and coarse, and who live meat and gravy lives with black coffee or heavy beer guzzled on top of each meal to wash it down in anticipation of the next; people who lie in soft billowy beds protected by silken coverlets and who frown and gulp bromo-seltzer; people who peck at the small, mean crumbs of life like chickens in a coop; people who wrangle about drain pipes; scold their maids; throw boiling water on starving cats, and malign clergymen behind their backs; people who fuss and fume and use poor French gleaned from novels voraciously gobbled; people who criticize and preach and snarl in the face of the wonderful sun; people who would crush anemones under their heels.

These people are blind bats. They are worse. They are bad. When I fall in with such people I make any plausible excuse and escape.

I do not want to lose one moment of joy in this life.

I am surrounded by beauty.

I want to touch it; feel it; breath it; live it; every hour.

I want no one to bind my ankles and halt them in the dance of joy.

To-day I spent some moments with an uncharitable soul. I felt poisoned and stifled. I hastened away as soon as I could.

I sought out a millinery shop, and wandered up and down its dim aisles adoring the softly flaring shapes blossoming delicately on tall, straight stands.

They revived me.

The shop was cool. The light was restful and pure. I did not think of maline at so much a yard; nor pansies at so much a velvet dozen; nor straw by the piece.

I thought simply of wandering in a garden of exquisite thoughts.

My heart bounded toward the women whose nimble fingers had brought forth the sweetness in their patient, illumined souls.

There were sunny slopes of yellow straw, with buttercups alight under a hill; there was a pale green straw meadow with a glistening ribbon river winding away under lilac sprays; there were silky gauze gardens brimming with luscious cheeked cherries; there was a high, white mountain slope and edelweiss at the brim; there were deep, mellow tones of a purple-green inland lake at sunset with spicy pines, daisies and forget-me-nots fringing its edge; there was a dell, just off the

beaten road—deep, shady and fern grown; there was a wide, open field laughing with grain; there was the heart of a mother—a trembling, soft tinted rose; the offering of a lover—a full, scarlet poppy; delicate baby faces, pink and white and exquisitely fragile.

There were visions and dreams and hopes woven of ribbon and straw.

Woven by one sweetly dreaming woman for another.

Woven by countless stooping, shut-in wraiths for countless care free, straight backed, conquering women.

## POOR OLD DEVIL

**I**F I should meet the devil some evening, out in the park,—I should want to be stylishly and becomingly gowned for the occasion—I should tweak his nose.

He has created more than a modicum of trouble for me during our thirty-two years acquaintance.

The devil would recognize the luxurious scent rising from my lingerie as a rare essence at eight dollars an ounce.

He would cast a supercilious eye at the luscious rose-blush Wisconsin pearl in my ring.

He would drop his walking stick in a seemingly delicate and careless manner against the hem of my skirt, so that in stooping to raise it he might ascertain whether my stockings were cotton or silk and view the contour of my ankle.

I should say to him, "Devil, I haven't the slightest idea what further use I can be to you, but before you ask me into a back room to drink or loll—I don't care for that sort of thing.

I detest stuffy places.

You may have gorgeous presents in your pockets, but I would rather climb around on the cool, clean mountains with God.



I know you have no deep refreshing problems to present; no dissonances to resolve.

Really, you are rather a tiresome fellow.

Everything down your way is so soft and easy.

Of course you always have plenty of comrades about. Smooth, oily, shouting, silent, smug, crafty people, but what would I do without the few people I love?

What would I do without noble music—without clashes and magnificent unclosed cadences?

Your music is sweet and subtle, but it does not grip me. That Bunny hug tune, now. I couldn't climb a mountain to that.

And I want to climb the high places, devil.

You are very pleasant, and all that, but you don't get anywhere.

I have only a few years on this particular planet, and I want to move on.

Take your arm away.

There is lots to do and see and be that you know nothing about.

- Your concession is way behind the times, anyway.

They cut out your lake of fire and the brimstone fifty years ago.

They did away with the lean little assistant devils, that hopped here and there, with the pitchfork balancing act.

The old world has moved you onto the back lot at last.

Your show isn't drawing the crowd it used to.

You are not permitted to pose in the altogether as was once your wont.

Your suit is subdued with just a touch of flashiness in the waistcoat. You are shaven, sleek, losing caste.

Dear, dear, how the times do change.

This war has made you very unpopular too, devil.

We don't want you about when we are cleaning up after several centuries.

If you want any recognition at all you'll have to grab a broom and turn in with the rest.

I'm afraid you'll never get a permit to run on the old lines again.

Ta, ta, devil. It has been a pleasant little chat, but I'm sure there will be no profit in further acquaintance.

## EMIGRANTS

**A** PARK; a wide stone guarded entrance; deep, cool niches and retreats; crisp clover-sweet stretches beyond, lately shorn by ruddy out door barbers.

Vistas glistening with pale green, amber and scarlet patches. Sturdy black-brown tree trunks, rising and thinning off into a network of tracery high up in the green.

Sounds; various sounds; the faint cry of a boy at tennis; the splash of gently cascading water. The ragged squack of a large, broad winged bird; a low, rare note from a tremulous throat. A slender, concrete lamp post, very tall; a gleaming milky-white globe atop; a noble skillfully wrought bridge flung across a wide gulch; a smooth dark road flowing down and about.

People.

Crowds of people pouring in through the gateway; spreading; covering; trickling like molasses poured out on a plate.

What a conglomeration of people scattering everywhere all over the earth!

All on the way somewhere or on the way back.

They weave and wriggle and they all seem

much alike, and yet each one is quite unlike his neighbor in minute ways.

In each there is a determination to do as he pleases; to live as his will directs.

In each there is a little half mad, half fierce feeling that he alone of the vast coagmentation is entirely worthy, brilliant, resourceful.

Yet they all strike an average, the days of their lives are much the same.

Yesterday I gloated over a new belt ribbon. I polished my rings. I dusted my books—rare volumes of worth. I wrote a magazine story and had it accepted, and I went to bed entertaining a warm feeling of importance and aloofness and superiority.

Millions of other women went to bed feeling just as I did and drew cool sheets up over their smiling, satisfied lips.

But we were none of us colossal, important figures; Gibaltars standing against waves of trivialties; we were simply infinitesimal specks living identical lives.

In John's heaven people do not sit about in isolated positions and concern themselves with getting a monopoly on the provisions of blessings.

John says: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings."

In the vortex of the maddest thoroughfare in

the park my citizenship in eternity is borne to me on a rapier point of quick, high feeling.

Ardent creatures smothered in thick furs, skimming forward in limousines; morose elderly persons shuffling at the edge of the crowd bent over walking sticks; sprightly foreigners; flushed and eager lovers; lean and hungry toilers; the underworld; the upper world; the middle world; all surging on together; emigrants far from home; tiny, scattered parts of one whole, and that whole, God.

## FOUND

**W**IDENING moments of exquisite peace and security brush sweetly across my consciousness at odd hours in each twenty-four.

When I go to bed in my pink and white room I hear a kind, wise, hopeful voice speaking to me from a printed page.

My devoted little bull terrier, Zipp, curls into a black and white splotch on the rose tinted coverlet.

Cool water from my neighbor's garden hose rises and splashes, rises and splashes, and a sweet earthy moisture creeps through my open window whispering of crisp radishes, and tiny curled lettuce leaves, and a variety of sturdily and fragrantly progressing greens.

Calm, summery-stockinged ankles ending in crisp, clicking heels, lofter carelessly or trip gaily over the pavement.

A low hum of musical voices is caught by a puff of breeze that careens with boisterous glee in to my bedside.

There is a tinkle of ice and long spoons against tall frosted glasses.

A motor car hums and is gone—gone on its adventurous way under the great white moon—gone

through the exquisitely scented air breathing a million quaint mysteries.

All this makes me feel humanly found.

In some way I was mysteriously gotten from somewhere.

I was secured from infinitude.

I am found for all time.

Out of a great chaos of whirling worlds; out of space; out of time, I was plucked, and now I lie secure in a pink and white bed while my neighbor's hose splashes till dawn.

Found is the beautiful, life-long, Favonian word that steadies me in heated hours and soothes and companions me through long, quiet nights.

Found—ah! what that means when the dew lies clear on pale roses!

## LOVE

**L**OVE, the arch magician of life, carries inimitable, opalescent legacies in his shimmering robe.

He has sat in my battle-ship gray drawing room on a straight backed mahogany chair, and shed a luminous light from wall to wall.

He has come in a natty blue suit, a young buoyant figure, pressing spicy flowers upon me, talking of fair paths and long waking nights on the edge of a lake or the top of a mountain. I have abashed him somewhat rudely by hinting that eggs must be poached and tenderloin broiled and these things cost on a mountain.

They cost on the level.

I have no aptitude for culinary matters.

Love has wriggled inside his blue suit and named me unfeeling.

I called him a dear, offered him cool ginger ale, and sent him home with a warm kiss on his mouth.

Then love has come as a child, a dewy, soft, pink rounded creature whose unnatural parents had lost her as one loses a pocket handkerchief in a crowd at the depot.



Slipping from their lives she was kicked about underfoot.

She brought sumptuous gifts into my drawing room.

Her exuberant shout will ring down all the years of my life and the quick, clear look of her eyes will light my last hour.

Love has come as a servant, with black gown and lace cap and tendered gifts in sweetest humility; as a relative on a journey to my town to have her upper teeth straightened—as a swart peddler with worthless trinkets in his pack and light in his heart; as an agent; as a caller; as a newspaper woman from Chicago; as a thief; as a bank president; as a low woman; as a teacher; as a doctor;—love comes to me in many disguises, but under his wrappings and trappings; in his rags; in his tweed; behind his dry books and his spectacles; his bars and his brooms, I know him.

Clambouring up my steps he pours redolent gifts into my arms. I have never turned him away because of his clothes or his occupation, for he is the fair, clean limbed sprite, love, through it all.

His warm fingers and his rich smile hold my soul back from black annihilation, and for his chance visits, I keep my life pure and sweet.

When, in a weak frantic moment, I feel a stranger within my own race, and my spirit shrivels with fear, love breathes peace into my throbbing ear.

I hold my head up as if my life span were an eternal high noon, and I an expectant bride.

## BREAKFAST

**F**ORMERLY I spent much time in wondering how common-place hours were spent by common-place women during the French Revolution. What, for instance, was breakfast time like in that soul searing epoch?

Now I know.

Breakfast has always seemed an insignificant word and a faltering institution, but now that we have been to war, breakfast assumes the proportions of the nation's backbone.

Though a mother's sons are on the ocean, and she has not heard from them for days, that momentous fact does not alter the insignificant fact that she takes no sugar in her coffee and plenty of cream, and that she declines a chop at breakfast because her physician has warned her against rheumatism.

Thus do the significant and the insignificant march hand in hand.

Thus does destiny move surrounded by gossamer threads.

Though ships sink, and nations are lost and won, breakfast goes on the same.

Though cannon belch liquid hells, it is put to me each morning to decide between a thin or a

heavy blouse. Buttoning the collar into place and hurrying to the table, lest the eggs grow cold, keeps me sane in the midst of horrors.

Though every tie in the world be broken; though there be no hope ahead, and a sleepless night behind, still there is breakfast waiting.

There is the steady aroma of mocha and java; the old, familiar cup with a nick near the handle; the clean, unemotional knife and fork and spoon; the prosaic form of tasting and eating that keeps me abreast of life.

What if one's stomach is upside down to-day and there is no charm in buttered toast—there will be another breakfast tomorrow, and if even then one is not ready, other breakfasts follow that with methodical precision and one has to come to them sometime.

The craving of body soon meets the agony of soul, and they go to the mat and fight out the difficulty over buckwheat cakes and the syrup jug. The agony of soul is drowned in saccharine and the sluggish blood is lured on its way by chunky morsels of butter. Fortified by vulgar food one reaches the moment when the morning paper is unfolded and one looks out of the window with a spark of interest kindling the eye so recently dull.

An empty, gnawing stomach is the slum of the soul.

Dark harbingers of woe are swatted from its borders by well broiled strips of bacon and a nicely cooked cereal has been known to change the affairs of men.

Once I was detailed to bring consolation to a young girl who was in jail for hitting her landlady with a piece of lead pipe. Our conversation was a sad, puny thing.

I was not particularly interested in lead pipes, long, short or of a slim slippery thickness most convenient to the smiting hand. I cared nothing for freckled-faced landladies, nor cheap rings, nor pitiful reasonings that led all the way around the landlady, the rings and the pipe and back again.

On the other hand the young prisoner was not interested in French knots, the raising of poppies was quite out of her ken and she cared not a hang for Keats.

But at last we found a think we could talk about with vim and sparkle.

That thing was breakfast.

She was eating it one morning when I entered her cell.

She related the thoughts she had had before breakfast and I rehearsed mine.

Then we spoke of the night and our dreams,

and that led to confidences and very soon we were afloat in a land where one of us was not a prisoner and the other one free, but where we were equals.

When I eat each dainty well ordered breakfast I see, in imagination, my elusive friend fate resting on his lance behind my Jacobean chair. He yawns in a friendly manner and smokes a pungent cigarette.

He has even tilted his shining head toward my throat and blown a slow, warm kiss of smoke against my cheek.

I invariably entertain the kindest feelings toward him over my coffee and eggs.

I do not feel afraid, nor anxious, nor apprehensive of him, but after breakfast when he slips out into the highways and byways, and darts at me unexpectedly, and jeers and laughs, and pricks and thrusts at me I find him a different fellow. My very descent down the white cement front stairway seems to intrigue him, and he dodges about me everywhere all day long trying to take advantage of me.

At breakfast time the course ahead lies fresh and fair.

One may be called out of town before luncheon, or be arrested before dinner time.

It is possible to lose money, make mistakes and mix things up generally during the course of a day, but at breakfast the world wakes renovated at the doorstep.

The ravening hordes of our competitors wait, couchant, until, the breakfast hour passed, we emerge from our lairs.

## OLD PEOPLE

**F**OR many, many months I have passed a neat brick house set deep among hydrangeas, gailardia and cosmos.

A precisely trimmed hedge shelters it from the rudenesses of the broad paved boulevard.

No matter how late I am alighting from the car on my homeward way I always stop and speak to the little old gentleman bending over his flowers in the garden.

I love this calm, white haired voyageur dearly.

I loved him the very instant I saw him, and though I didn't know his name, and he was equally ignorant of mine, we were comrades from the start.

That chastely colorful shaded house is an oasis in a dull journey to and from the heart of a dusty, prosaic city.

If an every-day woman had lived in the little house, instead of my old gentleman, it would simply have been one more neat little house to pass, and I would never have known the charms and the scents of its garden.

If, sauntering by, I had spoken to a middle-aged woman, calling out, "Wonderful sky, isn't it?" she would have settled her waist line with two capable



hands, repressed her lips a trifle, darted a sharp look at me to ascertain what queer manner of creature I was, and then answered, "Yes, I s'pose the sky is all right. I never get time to notice it."

She would have turned away and plucked a dry leaf from the hedge as if dismissing me and the sky from her presence, but long after I had boarded the grinding street car and clanged from her sight she would have ruminated about me.

She'd have told herself that it was a pitiful thing for a woman to have so few friends as to be obliged to call out to strangers; she'd have wondered who made my clothes; what street I lived on and whether my credit was good.

Not so with my darling old gentleman.

"Isn't the sky wonderful!" I cried, and he held out a generous hand and called, "Come in and see a bit of that same sky in my larkspur."

He took me for what I was, and after I boarded the clanging car he felt happier, not because he was satisfied my credit was good, nor that I lived on a reputable street, but because I loved stars and soft night winds and all growing things.

I have always wondered about old people.

Somehow they have never fitted into the dashing, headlong scheme of things as we know it.

They have saddened and worried me.

Their sweet ineffectualness has been powerful

enough to strangle me and force tears from my eyes.

But my affair with the little old gentleman of the bright, spicy garden has served to explain all old people to me.

A young person is concerned with the slimness, fitness, pinkness of the body.

The body is grown tight to the soul like the green burr of a chestnut.

There is no prying the soul loose from the body. The soul is green, underdone, unripe, buried and held in a clinching shell.

As the chestnut ripens, ages and mellows in its jealous close husk so the soul sucks richness through fingers and arms, brain, eyes and ears, and mellows, mellows till, a full glossy treasure, it no longer has need of the husk. Then there is a withering, a dimming, and a falling off of the husk, and a proud expose of the fruit in its glowing maturity.

Sweetness and kindness have so ripened my old friend's soul that it stands clear and brave over its husk, the radiance of it touching the thin palpitant blues, the smooth dusky golds of the blowing flowers.

Falling nitid and pure across pale roses it filters far down into the green and fertilizes and inspires the lustreless browns.

Old people whose husks cling at points here and there are still unripe.

And they are sometimes peevish because their husks pull.

Lord, grant that I may shed my husk, and not be fastened perpetually to it through the indolence of ignorance or intolerance.

My old comrade's husk clings at no point.

Calm, radiant, he rests and waits in the fragrance of flowers—life's exquisitely developed fruit.

## A CROWD OF MOODS

**F**OR hours and hours I stroll.

Through fair weather and foul; through snow; through sand; by rivers; along lakes; down loamy lanes; across wind-swept and spotless avenues.

Apparently I am alone.

Really there are two people with me.

They are my two grandfathers who died shortly after I was born.

I have always had a sense of deep companionship in lonely hours, but for years I did not quite know who was with me.

A man who had known my grandfather Robbins exclaimed one day: "I have seen Robbins look as you did just now more than a hundred times, and those were his ideas you have voiced and by heaven!—your very gestures bring him back to me."

My grandfather Sanborn was a judge on the supreme bench and he studies, sifts, catalogues and explains knotty characters to me. I am very glad it is my grandfathers who are living on in me and not my grandmothers. A girl needs a steadying masculine element for a balance.

I suppose had fortune provided me with a bro-

ther, my two dead grandmothers would have flown to the boy's assistance and leavened his masculine perversity and harshness, and pointed out light airy bits in his round of duties.

Thanks be for my grandfathers!

Doubtless they seized on me with great glee.

We have very happy times together. We are all very congenial.

If Grandfather Robbins rests, then Grandfather Sanborn and I grow weighty. We delve, and solve, and judge, and ponder; we sit still and write page after page and thoughts come to us that never arrive when we are a trio.

When Grandfather Sanborn rests, Grandfather Robbins and I tramp the fields and laugh and sing; we flirt and we bargain, and we come home quite tired out, but prodigiously cheerful.

Someone remarks at the dinner table, "You are in a fine, happy mood to-day, Gertrude. You were so serious yesterday you chilled me almost to the bone."

Selecting a stalk of celery with great care and precision I retort, "So, you like my genial southern grandparent better than my serious, clever, kindly northern grandparent—well, as for me, I have no preference—I love them both—"

"W-h-a-t? You do say such curious things, Gertrude. Please pass the celery."

Then Grandfathers Robbins and Sanborn and I jig up and down and laugh, and grandfather R. slaps Grandfather S. on the back and shouts, "Ha, ha, how do you like being called a mood, old boy? Eh? A mood! You—stately unto pompousness—you—before whose sentence the proud had to bow—you—a mood! That's a good one!"

## KISSLESS

**W**HEN one is slim and lithe and pulsating with florid youth—a creature of gauze and gold—one wants kisses. But when one is thirty-two, still dimpled but inclined toward embonpoint, and engrossed in footing up bills from the butcher, kisses must be relegated, however regretfully, to the top shelf with youth's low cut evening gown.

There were days when skimming blithely through autumnal forests, flitting over moist, pungent woodland paths, I felt kisses in every wanton breeze. I wove fantastic idyls around a grocery clerk whose mother made buttonholes for a living. I took long, damp walks in the rain with an embryonic magazine writer. Amorous youths lounged before the fireplace, strummed puny tunes on the piano, and drank lemonade on the verandah with gusto, and soft declarations. I presume I kissed them all. Now I go to walk at three o'clock on Sunday afternoons; staidly; circumspectly; in view of the neighbors; my companion is nearing forty; he is rotund, but of a pleasing tallness and compelling personality. He talks to me about Ruskin; he goes deep into the subject of oratorio; he speaks feelingly of foreign politics.

We walk with measured tread along a neat walled-in lake front; we exercise deliberately, healthfully for two circumscribed hours, and then we dine at a restaurant.

My friend settles me comfortably in my chair and orders viands calculated not to impair the digestion. With an ingratiating smile towards the waiter he makes graceful gestures in my direction and confides to him that he has something particular to say to me and does not wish to be served for half an hour.

He adds that the situation is entirely in the hands of the servitor, and this person goes away smiling, having scented a romance.

Once again I feel the light wings of impetuous youth. They hover over the celery holder. I cock my feather turban slightly over one eye and look up—expectant!

My escort smiles enigmatically, and looks long into my merry gray eyes; his gaze drops to my small warm mouth and then—and then—he leans over the table and tells me how successful his sister has been raising onions from seeds!

This is what it means to be thirty-two on a Sunday afternoon, and have a beau nearing forty.

But if ashes are thinly spread on youth's hot fires I am content. Once I was insanely happy because of kisses, now I am unknissed and sanely happy.



I converse with all my men friends as man to man; or grandchild to grandparent; or—to break the direct thread—as ancient Cleopatra to old Romeo.

After one is thirty-two it is the spirit of decorum that counts. No more running through the light soft rain to the garden gate; no quick fierce kisses snatched over the roses; no oars dropped for breathless moments into silent moving deep shadowed water; no intervals under aromatic pines; no crunching footsteps through the spicy needles—soft murmurings and silent spaces; no climbing into high towers, wind swept, star lighted; no more kisses after thirty-two. Just bills; lists of groceries; stoves to polish; calls to make; columns to write; no grocery clerks with mild blue eyes and bewitching smiles—only grocery boys with muddy shoes; stiff pompous, white-shirted men; bankers; physicians; lawyers; all unctuously polite; all thinking of families; house rents; money.

All of them gone far, far away from the land of kisses.

Still, mine is a warm tingling existence.

My superlative quality is my capacity for loving. I can love a ditch digger. I do love a ditch digger. Along with loving him I love his wife.

They are old. They have sparse gray hair; they live in a house set in a sea of cosmos; they

keep white chickens; white kittens and a white collie dog.

Cucumber vines, faintly sweet, spring forth in profusion and hang heavily over the low doorways, their spirally tendrils a network of slim beckoning fingers in the light of the moon. There are rag carpets on the floor, clean and sweet, padded with fragrant straw. There are fresh cookies in a jar. There are comforting worsted inottoes on the walls and always a place for me at the red cloth covered table.

I do not live to eat; nor live for money; nor live for clothes; I live to love. To that I am steadfast. Nothing can hinder me. There are seas of drab, every-day affairs to float and dip and plunge in, but over all, spreading warmly, spreading thickly, is the effulgence of love.

I love voices; voices that call over my telephone to ask how I feel; to say flowers are being sent to me; to offer me encouragement; to seek alms.

Thinly clad, my hair uncurled and unkempt, I clutch a corner of my kimona across my chill shoulder and pour out my love very early in the morning.

This is a game my soul can play at free of my body, as witness my disheveled state.

In a railroad train in a tunnel I cannot see to play cards; in a dark house I cannot see the stairway; in insufficient apparel I cannot appear in

a restaurant to eat larded tenderloin and mashed potatoes, but I can love anywhere and at any hour.

There is an unextinguishable pilot light in the hallways of my soul.

There is never darkness there; nor insufficient raiment.

My soul is forever fittingly clothed, and awake, and alight, and love does it.

All day people stream by my door; in my door; out of my door.

I love them all. Each one is peculiarly decent; each has a distinctly pleasing quality.

And my lovers! Those rare male beings who are attached to me by soft, dulcet sentiments.

When I trail into my pink and white nest at the end of a bustling day and soothe my eyes to sleep with cool cologne I hear my former lovers whispering tenderly.

A sweet-sharp winter breeze ruffles the muslin curtains, and out beyond in the crisp, cool night I hear the long-drawn plaintive call of a great black engine hurrying, hurrying through the white, white fields.

In its sooty internals it carries letters to me.

This far call stretches a thread to my heart, and balancing along it comes peace. The peace of deep friendship once hotly forged.

Stretched thinly, stretched imperceptibly, but

strongly, come these threads from my lovers of other years.

I go happily about the world easing the strands that there shall be no tangle and no broken places.

At the end of the first thread there is a tall lithe figure. He runs a virile artist's hand through tumbling black hair. His wife and his baby nod to me over his shoulder.

Sent straight down the thread from his heart his thought of me is bigger than space, longer than time.

It is an imperishable particle of flint held in his being that has found an imperishable particle of tinder in mine.

When I speak of him people say, "Why, how in the world do you manage to keep track of families when they go way off to heathen places and bury themselves? I should think it would be such a task—letters and inquiries and all that!"

It is a task. It is the sweetest task I know.

Growing roses is a task; digging around the roots; getting past the thorns; holding the rose close to one's breast while its culminating sweetness, rising, produces delirious ecstasy. Then laying the precious petals away in a rose jar over the smoldering fire on the holiday hearth.

I do not scatter a rose on the ash heap.

So I cultivate and coax and care for the warmth

of my lovers. That it may never die I annex wives and babies and invalid sisters.

I prune the plant of love and sprinkle it with the light refreshing spray of remembrance.

To lose love in the slow washing tide of the years is to me somehow oddly disgraceful.

My lover who is a surgeon is tangled in a violent consuming passion for a woman of the underworld. He comes to me bewildered and full of despair. His trouble is mine. His hopes; joys; the secret inner stream of his life is mine; because of this he will love me forever.

He will marry his Titian haired love; he will have to respect her foibles; he will have to clothe her and feed her and buy her a limousine.

She will love him, but she will chafe under his distraught moods.

His comely vigorous body will mean much to her, but his soul she will never discover.

He will have to tip-toe over the rugs when she sleeps and he will have to tip-toe around his own sleeping psyche.

He will only talk of mundane affairs to his pretty strange wife, but to me he can say what he chooses, he may ring my telephone bell any hour in the twenty-four.

He will confide to me his biggest hope and his meanest sin. His impetuously flung hat sunk in a swirl of papers on my desk, his hand firm as

steel and delicate as a micrometer clutching my faded shoulder, he will fling his burden onto my heart again and again.

Along the fine gold thread of faithfully nurtured love he will turn to me through bewildered eons.

I will keep him forever.

## A GIFT TO HIM FROM ME

**I** HURRY out to lay offerings at the feet of a poet; I pour words of praise on a cook who has fashioned a cake of layers, ornamented with citron and violet petals; I laud the architect who has designed my house, and the carpenter who has constructed it; I shower unstinted congratulations on Madame whose needle and threads have caught tawny autumn tints into a gown for my wearing; I buy jewelry and flowers for my friends and decorate lamp panels.

In this manner I spend my days.

I find time for the consideration of millions of trivial things.

**TIME**—I break time up into bits and parcel it out to every inconsequent person who demands it, and when the limitless, brooding night sky encompasses me I see at last that I have busied myself laying colored rags into the pack of a peddler, and left God's altar empty, thoughtlessly empty.

I am chagrined to have spent time in the praise of a pie or a gown when foamy clouds were drifting, drifting with messages from the wide sunset sky to me. But while I am frightened at my neglect I reflect that it is never too late.

**These earth days, these earth activities—how quickly I will drop them when I am caught up in that measureless throbbing beyond.**

**My heart grows suddenly warm with regard for my master and a deep loving thought is fashioned into a gift to Him from me.**



## TWILIGHT

**I** SPY you, dear ephemeral twilight, slipping from oak to elm; whisking lightly over the winding drive and dropping your lavender-ash mantle on the house and gardens.

I spy your timid drab face peeping in through my window.

Dear, quaint, faerie, little twilight. Here we are—just you and I.

I am so cozy and warm and happy in here, and you, mouse-colored witch, are trailing your soft little footsteps all over the world.

You are just a young thing like me—half-way between darkness and dawn.

But I am sentient, quivering, expectant, while you are grayly aloof.

You ignore fate and death; mad earthquakes; blue-green oceans; fresh minted money is nothing to you.

Your cool palm fans a dry leaf across an inscrutable Buddha's face dreaming through long centuries on a lotus-flower base.

Under your thin garments the perfumed chantings of the east and the gainful ringing cries of the west melt into silence. Kiss me, dear little twilight. Gather me into your arms. I want to

hear earth's tinkling bells at even; I want to be wound in the purple-gray mists curling over sweet scented hills; I want to touch baby eyelids closing whitely to dreams.

Take me over the tops of palms; into the pale running surf; cast me onto the wings of great tree-ward bound birds; help me scale pine-mained cliffs; let me skim naked and keen over the nacreous Nile; plunge me into the blue snows on great heights; take me where the wolf cries; then leave me alone on the beach at Waikiki to gaze wide lidded at the clerestories of heaven.

Slim, suave little twilight, I lose you even as I plead. Unrelenting night blots you from my window, but your thin velled mysterious beauties will leave a trail of gold through the dark and your honey-sweet breath will stir me to dreams through the glare of gaudy fierce days.

## TO MY DEAD LOVER—A SOLDIER

**J**UST a few short days ago you were here with me. To-night I am walking in the valley near your home, alone. Through belching fire and liquid hell one word has come. It was typed in purple ink on a yellow square of paper. It is a small, small word, but in strength Herculean. Raising you from festering holes and rivers of blood it has carried you to the cool wide sky that sends me clear dew on these pale roses. Dead! That was the word. I feel numb. In my numbness I remember your long warm kiss across my mouth; it is sweet and clinging and eternal. I am walking in the valley, dear, but my eyes are on the hill. There is a filmy white something at the summit. It is a child. He comes toward me happily. He has your deep blue eyes; your silky hair; the contour of his outstretched arm is much like yours. It is your very blood that runs so quick along his veins. Clean courage and bounding hope were passed from your heart into his. He whispers to me of all the children in the world. Dead! The child, who is your child and mine, tells me the purple type translated in other spheres means in reality you are progressively alive! You

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have stepped with your fair chivalry from this world to another to make room for him.

Do you remember when we were children, we played under the twisted apple tree in your father's yard? Our boy's playground will be the great wide earth. He is very tender and loving. His kiss draws the sting from my trembling lips. You, my lover, have left me abounding joy in this fair lad named Freedom.

14129A

## CABLES

**J**UST as I believe in the telephone and the Atlantic cable, and the apple tapioca pudding in the refrigerator, so do I believe in mental telepathy.

Once a week I scour the receiver of my telephone that there may be no germs lurking on its edge.

I caution the grocer to send me fair unspotted fruit that the apple tapioca pudding may be a peace-provoking factor in my daily routine.

And to the end that my mental days may be unclouded I scour the germs of unhappiness from my friendships, and pick only the minds that are fair and unspotted.

The digestion of my soul is delicate.

If a friend of mine is unhappy I get it over the mental cable.

If the unhappiness continues indefinitely, and my friend makes no honest effort to divest herself of it, I cut the cable. I will have no mental connection with a shriveling soul. I want my cables laid only to fair, broad points.

My friends sit daily in a magic circle with me.

Before I take a problem into my mind to mull over I consult their respective interests.

If I am afflicted with grippe germs I do not cough in the proximity of my friends.

If my mind is affected by germs of doubt, fear, despair, I quash them ere they fly over the invisible but powerful cable of thought transference.

I do not smile simply because I am amused; but because smiling is a good digestant; promotes circulation; tinges my cheek with carmine; I do not smile simply to further my own ends. I smile to keep the cables cleared.

## A THANK OFFERING

**I** AM thankful for stupid people.

Who would do all the world's uninviting work if it were not for these?

I am grateful to the garbage collector. What if the task had fallen to me!

I am inexpressibly thankful to the man on the carrier in a sawmill whose monotonous hewing and hacking and jolting—whose mad rush homeward at noon, accompanied by hundreds of other perspiring beings—whose dead tired monotonous nights are his and not mine.

I am thankful for every patient low-browed, broad-backed industrial worker.

I offer up thanks for chefs. Their faces, steamy and red from stews, and broths, save mine.

I like the butcher, the sewer digger, the chimney sweep.

Arrayed in silk, cool fragile pearls about my throat, delicate orchids adorning my corsage, I smile up to God who gave me my life and upon these burly men who sustain it.

I am deeply thankful for my chauffeur. He is illiterate, practical, gummy and grimy. Because he sits staunchly beside me it is possible for me to skim the olive-green hills and see their del

treasures. He does not see them. He does not want to. He sees ruts in the road and avoids them that I may rise easily as a bird into groves perfumed with cedar. He sees sand blisters on the tires; he hears loose rims and the consequent squeaks and rattles; his mind is a gasoline gauge.

I dream rare dreams and my château en Espagne is filled with flowers and glistening bird wings beat softly over its turrets.

I discern an ancient burial mound rising beside a loose shuttered school house.

I reconstruct wigwams in a clearing. I see braves. I hear low calls. I snuff meat sputtering.

I drift through generations of joy my jubilant psyche couched on the moving wind.

There is a gamboge tinted field; a deep foam flecked river; night-black crows flying over pale wheat; primroses in gay patches; a burned savanna and a sweet acrid scent rising from its charred residuum; pallid spots and dim caverns; translucent mists upon polychromatic vapors; at the end of the long white mysterious curved road there is an Inn; frosty white linen; fried chicken; corn on the cob; a short stocky well patronized gambling machine that swallows loose change with quick pleasant chugs.

The perfumes of daylight melt into the rich-



ness of night; soft, mellifluous, dulcet, smooth-flowing night.

The moon comes bursting in a curious way through the leaves of a great tree.

I fancy the tree a warmly illumined dwelling, each moon-touched spot the lighted window of a room.

A home!

One man and one woman!

Someone to love through still summer days, and cuddle through long winter nights; someone to come home to; to dream by the fire with; someone to carve turkey on Thanksgiving; arrange excursions on the fourth of July; someone with tender caressing hands during illness; someone to say, "there, there, dear, don't you worry a bit—the doctor says it's not small-pox, nor leprosy, but just a cold in the head."

Home! A deep tilted chair in a sunny side window; a tumbled hospitable desk; caresses floating, floating over the blue and white rugs . . .


So I ascend and dip, travel and dream, my chauffeur's stout bulk interposed between me and destruction.

His untidy hand on the wheel, his squinting gaze on the road, his littered bolt besprinkled mentality pilots me into the clouds.

Swaying in delirious ecstasy, gone quite away from my red-buttoned motor coat, leaving my

blue jersey knees, my engine-warmed ankles, and my ninety-eight cent vell, I journey out into the sky with the souls of friends gone on ahead.

To motor across the face of the wonderful earth is good and—a voice crashes into my revery. “This is the plainest piece of country I ever see, Miss; we ain’t met no one all day and there’s no road houses, barrin’ the Inn, where a guy can get a mouthful to wash down the dust. I say we go north tomorrow where ther’s more doin’.”



## INTERIORS

ONE day a sensational story sizzled over the wire and perched on the dustiest corner of my desk flapping its red wings rapaciously. The man at the desk next to mine gave me a peremptory command: "Go out to that dame's house and get her reasons for copping off another woman's husband for herself. Get a 'pic' and some spicy gab and hurry!"

I approached the house of the woman mentioned in the lurid divorce suit.

I rang.

There was no answer. I turned the knob cautiously, as any good reporter or bad burglar will, and the door gave gently.

I made a wary entrance into a long fragrant drawing room.

In the garden, beyond, through a clear window curtained by monk's-cloth edged with wide bands of heavy filet lace, I discerned a pink-cheeked maid conversing with a neat plumbing inspector.

They were idling between crescent-shaped beds of heavenly lillies. I tip-toed about. Then I sat down. Silence impressed itself upon me. Silence,

the perfume of flowers, and the rare haunting sweetness of a disciplined soul.

It was evident that no one had been asked to decorate this house for its mistress.

No one had been paid to draw pictures of her soul and place them about at discreet intervals.

Perhaps my lady was above stairs in her bath; perhaps she was driving quite at the other end of the town.

But her personality was at home and entirely at my service.

Serenely I surveyed an antique oak chest; a pair of iron torcheres, and a tall Italian chair covered in red antique damask.

Under a low hung light Keats, Swinburne and Gibson waited invitingly at the corner of a comfortable davenport covered in beige-colored mohair with cushions of petit point.

Sweet child faces, framed with loving care, looked from all sides of the room.

I had come to pry and this gracious house opened arms of welcome to me. It breathed of a life full of varied and wholesome interests. It breathed gentle good breeding, of which I could not secure a "pic" for the most dictatorial editor in the world.

Neither would I rummage about, though the opportunity was golden, and secure a "pic" of my hostess herself.

I would simply go away, unobserved as I had come.

I would spare this woman the horrors of an interview of which I already knew the conclusion.

She had never taken anything that was not rightfully hers.

I would tell the editor there was no story at all. That is no story detrimental to this woman.

Presently the court found that out.

I staked my job on a silent, sunlit interior. I risked beefsteak, coffee and pie, and a good place to sleep because of a soft-toned rug, a crystal bowl of merry calendulas and rows of good books, and the intangible impressions emanating from a fine personality.

The woman was above anything small and mean. She was the victim of a designing female who lived behind fearful Nottingham lace curtains, toasted her feet at an unspeakable gas log, while she chewed gum and traveled up and down hysterical miles in a cumbersome rocker.

Of course the court was obliged to sit in its stuffy, grimy-paned room and ask hundreds of driveling, tiresome questions.

It frittered away the golden sunshine of a day that will never come back arguing and expounding

and torturing innocent creatures upon its slow rack.

If the court had gone around right after breakfast and looked at the homes of the two women the situation would have cleared immediately.

A woman sitting beside me in the juvenile court said to me one day, "Ugh! what a disgustingly bad little boy that is on the stand."

And I retorted hotly, "I don't believe it is the boy at all,—it's atrocious wall paper, messy bedrooms and kitchen, soiled, untidy breakfast table, horrible conversations across beer pails. It is the style to be low and coarse and bad where the boy lives and he has tried with obedient, pitiful little manfulness to follow the style."

It frightens me when I think of gentle child souls thrust into vulgar, gaudy interiors.

Wisps of heavenly gold bright child hair floating over crude Sunday supplements! The walls of a child's home should shed permanence, beauty, repose, gaiety, everlasting purposefulness.

The thoughts that would occur to a child arising daily from a carved Chippendale bed under the gaze of an Andrea del Sarto or of Leonardo da Vinci's incomparable Madonna would be quite unlike the thoughts of a child rising under the savage eye of a prize fighter displayed on a dauby poster stuck over a cracked looking glass.

It is not inconceivable that red carpet, green walls, yellow plush cushions and indigo draperies might nurture and educate an embezzler. For had not his very home begun with him in his tender years by stealing all the beauty of harmony from before his searching young eyes?

## UMBRELLALESS IN THE COSMIC WEATHER

**A** SOUR penned critic has dealt essay writers a cutting blow. He says that we write essays because we haven't the gumption to think out a plot from start to conclusion.

To prove he is utterly wrong I have inquired carefully into the life, past and present, of my laundress, and from the fragments gathered at odd intervals in my laundry over the oozing tubs, I have patched out a tale.

The name of the laundress is Katie MacKay. That calm cognomen anchors her to the house she lives in, and keeps her out of the police court.

Just because her name is Katie MacKay and not Cleopatra or Juliet Capulet she has fared sadly in love.

Springing untutored from dull generations of psycheless mortals, unaccustomed to heart depths and soul heights, beaten upon by those strange outer forces having to do with the eternal grinding of its pawns by the imperturbable universe, Katie's soul has wandered about, shivering and unprotected, umbrellaless in the cosmic weather.

To Katie, her parlor furniture was as the Alpenstock to the Matterhorn. By the sheen of its polished sides she aspired to social heights.



Until her marriage to Joe, Katie had no parlor furniture. She had been brought up, without maternal care, in a kitchen and two bedrooms provided by an older brother.

The diet of her early years was largely composed of greasy fried potatoes and strong coffee. Her childhood clothes, purchased at second-hand stores by herself, with a total disregard of appropriate size, style or effect, gave her somewhat the appearance of a chinaman's nightmare. Katie had always regulated her comings and goings to suit her own sweet will and she was a veritable little monster of selfishness.

Joe and Katie had gone to school together. When Joe was twelve he had thrown a spitball at a boy in the front row and hit Katie instead. This miscalculation had drawn his gaze to Katie's curls and sparkling eyes and it had remained there ever since. Past the days of spitballs, newspaper routes, ice cream parlors and Saturday night dances, went Joe and Katie. Katie stopped reading three cent thrillers and went deep into the more absorbing literature sent out by an enterprising installment plan furniture company.

One proud Saturday night Joe and Katie presented themselves at the furniture store.

"This here mayhoganny parlor soot looks preety good to me, what you say, Joe?"

"Please yourself, kid," replied Joe with a mag-

nanimous wave of his arm. The "soot" was bought and paid for.

It was apple-blossom time in Katie's soul. She didn't express it just that way. She said she was "terrible happy."

She invited her friends in and they admired the various pieces of the suite, drank coffee and ate a great deal of cake, and all that had to be paid for.

The bank account Katie and Joe had planned became of no account.

Then Katie began trifling with a fundamental, for she lost interest in Joe's affection and retained interest only in what that affection made it possible for her to buy.

The more Joe earned the more she spent.

She dreamed dreams of social attainment as she reclined on her "mayhoganny soot."

Work, once so pleasant, so stimulating that had painted a glow in Katie's eyes and on her cheek, had only terrors for her now, the terrors of roughened skin and knotted knuckles.

But the thing that squeezed all the kindness out of Katie's soul was her fear of being judged by her new friends for something less than she was worth, which Katie proved herself to be by reason of such thinking.

Katie's extravagant pace, combined with busi-

ness reverses, sent Joe into bankruptcy. Illness followed.

When, after months of struggle, the mahogany furniture was sold to buy food and medicine, Katie, storming, put on her coat.

"Just wait, Katie. I'll work day and night when I get well, and sometime we can have things again," begged Joe.

"I didn't get married to wait. Goodbye," answered Katie.

Rather than remain in the position of a woman whose husband could not take care of her, and so lose caste in the eyes of her neighbors, Katie left Joe.

An enterprising reporter nosed out Katie's selfish love for her furniture, which had displaced her love for her husband. He described the padded backs and slick curves of the former and took a picture of the latter.

Katie's desertion of Joe furnished a theme for twenty-five lines of sob stuff the following Sunday and then, as far as the public was concerned, the episode was closed.

Katie moved to another and bigger city.

She rented a small room close to the business center and went to trimming hats for a living. With the dreary round of work, no friends and the remembrance of her selfishness as her only companion through the long evenings, Katie's last

apple-blossom withered out of her soul and icicles hung there instead.

Joe recovered his health. Then, with no one to work for and no one to go home to he drifted and finally disappeared.

Time carried the thing along past five dreary years and brought it down to one spring morning.

When Katie got out of bed and her thin cold feet touched the strip of blue and white rag carpet that formed a bright oasis in a desert of shabby floor, she was conscious of a stiffness and ache in every bone. As she parted her hair evenly in the center, coiling each side neatly over her ears and bringing the ends up high toward the front, she discovered six new white hairs. Inadvertently she knocked the tablespoon off her bottle of cod-liver oil emulsion and it went jangling onto the floor. A cramped muscle caught as she stooped to pick it up and cringing with pain she sank into a chair. She moaned.

Katie was on the way to becoming a neurasthenic. The cod-liver oil bottle was only one of many from which Katie dosed her attenuated form. She worried day and night with the fear that she was possessed of some deep-seated disease, turning her attention mistakenly to the region of her stomach, when all the time the difficulty lay in her soul.

She had taken three sets of pills the previous night, and this particular morning found her struggling with a feeling of goneness.

Augmented by the cramped muscle, she was in a deplorable state when someone knocked on her door. Opening it she disclosed her landlady.

"Now, I ain't goin' to keep you a minute," said that person, bustling in cheerily. "I know you have to race like sin to get to your job on time, but I got some news for you and I thought best to tell you while you was feeling fresh in the morning. I do consider it's reel mean telling anybody something to upset them when they're all beat out at night."

Katie's dark circled eyes grew bigger. What news could anybody possibly have to tell her!

"I just had word from my daughter," continued Katie's visitor, flouncing down on the bed, "that her husband was took sick and lost his job. She says she wants to do the best thing by him so she is going to work. Now I'm writing to tell her to come straight home to ma and bring him with her. I'll look after him days and take some of the strain off her. You know a man always frets and worries, so I figure with happy surroundings and cheerfulness he'll get well quicker. Now, I'm awfully sorry, but I'll have to give the folks your room. My motto has always been "do for others," but in a case like this it looks like that when I do

for my family I ain't doin' for you, but I guess our families come first and then the rest will work out. I'll try to get a nice room for you somewheres in the neighborhood."

The shock of being asked to find other quarters was not so great to Katie as the shock induced by the unfamiliar expression, "for others," and the strange coincidence of the daughter's case with her own.

As the warm motherliness of the other woman's tone reached her heart a vast revulsion of feeling swept over Katie.

Maybe that was the key!

Maybe it was just doing for others that brought smiles and happiness and homes and loved ones.

"That's all right," replied Katie, "just you take my room and don't you feel bad about me a bit. Perhaps I'd ought to move further down anyway so I could run home at noon and lay down half an hour to rest my back."

That was the first unselfish statement Katie had ever made and it brought a queer feeling around her heart, and the contemplation of what her gracious acquiescence to the mother's plan would bring to that brave heart, and the difference it would make in the lives of the two young people, sent strange warm thrills all over Katie's being. It made her feel as if she had taken a tablespoonful of tonic.

She turned the phrase "for others" round and round in her mind all the morning.

When the noon hour came some of the girls in the shop were laid off for the afternoon and Katie was among them.

She hurried out into the bright sunlight, a happy thought giving impetus to her step.

There was a little lame girl that sat next to her in the shop and Katie had noticed the hollow place between the chair back and the girl's bent spine.

She would put the wonderful formula "for others" to the test!

She turned her steps toward the poorer section of the city where she knew her quest for a cheap but comforting soft pillow would meet success.

Everywhere people were beating mattresses and hanging out freshly washed blankets, stretching curtains and pounding rugs. Every homely motion in the onward progress of the city's housewives beat remorse and fear and shame out of Katie's musty soul.

"I wisht I could sew a button on a gent's shirt, or darn some socks, or brush tobacco off a rug," said Katie to herself. "I wisht I'd never got mad at Joe. Maybe he's found some spot in the world where he's happy and folks treat him right. I picked a desert island for mine. I read a saying once about blessings brighten as they vamoose an'

I guess the fellow who wrote it sensed this lonesome feeling. If you don't pay out the love you promised to pay it all gets charged up against you till by-and-by you can't meet the bill no way. My! I feel blue. Perhaps this walk'll clear it off."

Katie reached an old second-hand store and furniture shop, that argosy of the impecunious. Still impelled by the beautiful new feeling of trying to do for others, which had become only momentarily obscured by the reversion to her troubles, she entered the shop in search of the pillow for the crippled girl.

The clerk was busy with another customer, so Katie stood around and watched a bearded man buying furniture. He had only a small sum of money and seemed a trifle puzzled as to its best disposal.

"Perhaps this lady will help you," suggested the clerk, who was conversant with the freemasonry of the poor, as the customer hesitated over a particularly knotty problem involving a decision between mahogany and oak.

"You see," explained the man to Katie, who had stepped forward willingly at the clerk's suggestion, "I'm getting furniture to go to housekeeping, and I've forgot just what a woman likes. I ain't got the woman yet, although I've traced her as far as this city, but I've had a kinda feeling,



these pretty spring days, that maybe she's as lonesome for me as I am for her."

Once more Katie's mind reverted to her own story and its tragic end, but she pulled herself up and pitched in with a will and forgot her own sorry plight in her new creed of helping another.

"No, don't you take that rocker!" exclaimed Katie suddenly. "Sure, mayhoganny is good value for the money, but I believe in plain folks buyin' commonsense things. The right amount of work is a blessing, but if a woman spends her hull time polishin' mayhoganny and dustin' gim-cracks, she don't have a spare minute to get the dust off her disposition."

The startled look that had crossed the bearded stranger's face when Katie had volunteered to help with his domestic problem, had changed to one of profound satisfaction.

He followed Katie obediently about as she pulled and hauled and unearthed gems of household usefulness from dingy corners.

Together they got down on their knees, Katie forgetting all about the stiffness in hers, and looked up at the burners of an oven that was under discussion.

"There!" finished Katie when the chairs, table, stove, pictures and rug had passed her rigid inspection, "now you've got enough furniture to

satisfy any woman and it's plain and sensible and didn't cost a fortune, either."

They walked to the front of the store where the bright spring light came flooding in.

"Will it satisfy you, Katie?" asked the man quietly.

Katie stared into her husband's face. The thing that kept her from fainting was the discovery that a button was missing from his shirt.

## GOD'S SONG

**T**HE music of God's song rushes over the earth from sky to sky. I want no tawdry jewelry fastened upon me to jingle against its sweet whisperings.

I want my life clean and bare of useless inconsequences that I may be filled and filled again, like a clean, straight reed, with the glory of the great song.

I catch the note up from the dust; from baby lips; from strange dark corners where the poor are massed; from clouds; from old men's whisperings; I hear it above the clacking typewriter in a newspaper office; I catch it trailing finely through the voice of a misshapen clerk in the basement of a department store; it murmurs through the cultured musings of a world traveler as he sits at ease on a mountain ridge; I hear it in a pebble thrown against a lonely shore; in the command of my enemy; in a gathering of polish police at a park; in trivial common-places I hear the song, and in my still closed room, and it is the same song that is ringing from star to star.

Because I have heard this song I cannot fail.

I will follow it from morning to morning.

It will lead me from a known brightening now  
to a long sweet forever.

Rippling exquisitely ahead it will assure for me  
my citizenship in eternity.













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